

GLEANINGS FROM THE FIELD OF ART

By Carl P. Bolmar

The confirmed report that Josh Milvane's gift of \$50,000 to the Washburn college endowment fund is to be used in the building of an art building on the college campus comes as an exceedingly pleasing piece of news to all Topekanes who are interested in art.

It has been shown again and again that Topeka needs a place in which to hold art exhibitions and to give art lectures, and it is expected that the projected building will contain such facilities in addition to the regular college art school. The erection of an art gallery and lecture hall in Topeka has been under serious discussion by the Topeka Art Guild, the Women's club and several other organizations during the last two years.

Of course the town could hardly support two art buildings, and there is very little doubt that the Washburn college authorities would be glad to cooperate with the art organizations of the city and that arrangements can, and will be made whereby the latter will be able to use the projected building, just as the college art department has so kindly allowed them to use the school hall.

A committee to select the site for the new building and to formulate its general plan, was organized on Monday of this week, and held its first meeting at the Bank of Topeka. The members of this committee are: P. F. Womer, chairman; S. E. Collier, J. D. Whittemore and Mrs. Harrison Morgan.

I do not wish to tire the public by constantly writing about one person, and Birger Sandzen certainly has come in for a goodly share of attention in this column during the past year or so. But when one thinks of the distinction and honor that such citizens as Sandzen confer upon a state, it is certainly fitting and proper that a knowledge of how they are esteemed by the world at large should be brought to the attention of their fellow citizens on every reasonable occasion.

Then besides, Birger Sandzen has won too secure a place in the hearts of his many friends in Kansas, by reason of the stirring quality of his personality to make them ever tire of hearing about his successes.

Therefore I feel venture to quote the following article, which appeared in the Christian Science Monitor of March 25, 1922.

In noting that Birger Sandzen leads a double life it should at once be explained that both of his entities are wholly to his credit. By profession he is a teacher, and that sedate calling has occupied him for some years in the chair of languages and the literature of art in Bethany college at Lindborg, Kansas. In vacations he has been trampolining the West and reawakening in himself the adventurous impulses of his Viking ancestry, carrying with him a compass, a knife and a satchel containing the silences and the sumptuous coloring of that favored land. Back in a homestead in Graham county, Kansas, he has transcribed his enthusiasm, applying himself with impetuous energy and relish to canvas, to paper and to wood-carving blocks.

For some years he produced for mere joy of it. Now and then he sent paintings and prints to the general store in Lindborg, where the townsfolk and farmers as they came in with their crops looked them over. But rarely went further than to say pleasant things of them. There were several in the exhibition line in neighboring counties, with much the same result until someone connected with the Scandinavian Foundation came along and called the attention of that body to the professor. A few samples of his work which were brought here and sprinkled in mixed exhibitions led finally, in the present season, to a foundation movement for a one-man Sandzen show, and that occasion achieved for him a real artistic success.

He burst upon the season like a meteor, with a display of oils, water colors and prints such as had never before come out of the west. His hangings filled three galleries at Babcock's and there was not a backer, no subject among them. The public found him equally forceful in what ever medium he touched. In presenting a picture of a wooded clump, or even of a single tree rooted seemingly in solid rock, he unfolded to the beholder by suggestion the might of mountains, a horizon of sky-piercing peaks and canyon depths glorified in color. No American painter had ever brought back any such impressions, probably never having felt them as did this son of the Vikings. He must really have seen what he reports, for he makes others see it. A tour of the galleries was like a travel study thru Arizona, New Mexico, the Grand Canyon, the Sierras, the Pacific coast and back to Manitou, where the garden of the gods held him for a protracted visit.

Mr. Sandzen's art was not wholly of his own making. In his youth he studied with Zorn and Berah in the Art Students League of Stockholm, and then he took a course in Paris. Since 1911 the west has claimed him, most of the time as a staid pedagogue. The fires that must have burned within him during the long teaching years are at last in full flame, and his art "arrival" may be confidently proclaimed.

Accompanying this article was a four column reproduction of one of Sandzen's black prints, "Sunset."

A series of art forums was recently held in Philadelphia under auspices of the Art Alliance, in which a number of America's most prominent artists of widely different schools of thought and work, were asked to give their opinions on the trend and tendency of modern art.

The verdict of these men is curiously unanimous. They all agree that the rising generation of artists is seeking for fresh expression and new ideals without a fundamental knowledge of the everlasting laws of nature and of technique. Idealism, knowledge, and technique must ever go hand in hand to produce perfect art.

The errors and exaggerations of extremists, however, do have a certain value. The extremist generally barges on some one theme which has a foundation of truth or is true so far as it goes, and he may in their floundering discover something not heretofore perceived which will be a permanent and beneficial contribution to true art.

The clear way, as disclosed by these forums, in which the world's great artists see the trend of the times, is

most encouraging for the future of art.

It shows that art will not be dashed to pieces against the rocks of radicalism nor founder in the decay inseparable from lack of basic study.

A recent notable happening in the world of art was the installation of the Herbert Ward gift of African sculpture and African trophies of the journey to the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

Herbert Ward was an English sculptor, traveler and naturalist. He was with Stanley in the Congo, and lived in the African forests between the years 1884 and 1889. At the time he became much interested in the negro savages with which he came in contact and took up a close and earnest study of their modes of life. He made many friends amongst them and secured many valuable and interesting trophies as gifts, or thru barter.

Upon returning to his native land he took up the work of modelling statuary of the primitive Negro, engaged at his familiar tasks and pastimes, in his joys and in his griefs. These models he afterwards had cast in bronze. Some of the works are of heroic size.

Ward married an American lady, and while the pair were on a visit to the United States he became deeply interested in the Smithsonian Institution and its work. Finally he resolved to bequeath his entire collection, which included the art objects of the most ethnological groups in the world to that institution.

He died while performing active service in the World war.

Last month the Ward collection was installed in a suitable room of the Smithsonian, the donor's widow making a fitting presentation address.

The occasion was made notable by the attendance of many of the dignitaries of both the United States and of European countries.

Two important memorials to be unveiled in Washington, D. C., this month are the Admiral Robert E. Peary memorial at Arlington cemetery, and the equestrian statue of General Grant in the old Botanical gardens near the national capitol.

Ground has also been broken in the Botanical Gardens for the George Gordon Meade memorial, a gift to the nation from the state of Pennsylvania. The Meade memorial is the work of the Philadelphia sculptor, Charles Graf.

HUTCHINSON GUARD COMPLETE.

Organization of 130th Kansas Field Artillery is announced.

Hutchinson, Kan., April 8.—The organization of the 126th field artillery, Kansas national guard, is now complete. Major Guy Rexroad, recruiting officer, announced today. The last unit of the regiment, the service battery and regimental band, has been assigned to Great Bend, the municipal band there being accepted.

The first battalion of the regiment is stationed in Hutchinson, the second battalion is in northeast Kansas, with batteries at Hixson, Hixson and Troy. The combat train is at Sterling, and the headquarters battery at Salina.

COUNTY FAIR DATES.

The dates for county fairs in forty-six Kansas counties have been decided upon, while fifty fair associations have decided definitely to stage fairs this fall, according to reports received by Secretary J. C. Mohler of the state board of agriculture, and announced here. In addition to the county fairs, the dates for the Hutchinson and Topeka state fairs have been arranged. The International Wheat show will be staged at Wichita again this year.

A list of the Kansas fairs to be held this year, and the dates of those arranged, follows:

KANSAS FREE FAIR, TOPEKA, September 11 to 16.

Kansas State Fair, Hutchinson, September 18 to 22.

International Wheat Show, Wichita, August 28 to September 1.

Allen County Agricultural Society, Leola, September 1 and 2.

Barton County Fair, Great Bend, October 3 to 6.

Mourning County Fair, Fort Scott, September 19 to 22.

Lawrence County Fair, Lawrence, August 28 to September 1.

Chase County Fair, Cottonwood Falls, September 6 to 9.

Cherokee County Fair, Columbus, August 6 to 11.

Clay County Fair, Clay Center, September 10 to 12.

Colfax County Fair, Colfax, September 10 to 12.

Eastern Cowley County Fair, Burden, September 6 to 9.

Comanche County Agricultural Fair, Comstock, September 10 to 12.

Crawford County Fair, Girard, September 12 to 15.

Douglas County Fair, Troy, September 10 to 12.

Douglas County Fair and Agricultural Society, Lawrence, September 10 to 12.

Ellis County—Golden Belt Fair association, Hays, September 10 to 12.

Ellis County—Great Southwest Fair, Dodge City, September 10 to 12.

Franklin County Agricultural Fair, Ottawa, September 10 to 12.

Franklin County Fair (Franklin county), September 10 to 12.

Gray County Fair, Cimarron, September 20 to 22.

Greenwood County Fair, Eureka, August 22 to 25.

Harper County Fair (Harper county), Anthony, August 2 to 5.

Harper County Breeders' Association, Anthony, October 20 to 23.

Jackson County Stock Show and Fair, Holton, September 10 to 12.

Valley Falls Fair and Stock Show (Jefferson county), September 26 to 29.

Labette County Fair, Overbrook, August 20 to September 1.

Sylvan County Fair and Agricultural Show (Lincoln county), September 10 to 12.

Lincoln County Fair, Mound City, September 10 to 12.

Lincoln County Fair and Sales Association (Lyon county), September 10 to 12.

Blue County Fair, Blue Rapids, September 20 to 22.

Menard County Fair, Menard, August 29 to September 1.

Mitchell County Fair, Beloit, September 20 to 22.

Montgomery County Fair, Coffeyville, August 21 to 23.

Nebraska County Fair, Seneca, September 5 to 8.

Nebraska County Agricultural Society, Seneca, September 20 to 22.

Nebraska County Agricultural Association, Seneca, August 20 to 22.

Overbrook Free Fair, Overbrook, September 28 to 30.

Polk County Fair, Larned, September 27 to 29.

Polk County Fair association (Phillips county), Phillipsburg, September 12 to 14.

Cottawatomie County Fair, Otago, September 20 to 22.

McDonald Community Fair (Rawlins county), September 27 to 29.

Northcentral Kansas Free Fair (Republican county), Belleville, September 20 to 22.

Rock County Fair, Stockton, first week in September.

Russell County Fair, Russell, October 3 to 6.

Rush County Agricultural and Fair Association, Rush, September 10 to 12.

Saline County Agricultural, Horticultural and Mechanical Fair, Salina, August 20 to September 1.

Stafford County Stock Show, Stafford, October 17 to 20.

Trigo County Fair, Wakeley, September 10 to 12.

Washington County Stock Show, Washington, first week in October.

Wichita County Agricultural and Fair Association, Leola, August 13 to 15.

If Burnt Cork Were Cement Mr. Swor Would Have Used Enough to Erect a Building

Famous Black Face Star With Al. G. Field Show Tells Young Ladies of His Work on Stage—He Gives Many Interesting Facts About Work in Minstrel Show.

BY MARION D. BARTEL AND JEANETTE DOOLEY.

"If this burnt cork were cement, I'd have used enough of it in the thirty-one years of my minstrel work to have built the Topeka Santa Fe building," Bert Swor sat before the mirror in the star dressing room at the Grand theater. He held out a pot of black fatty looking substance, the cork which he uses in his blackface work as star comedian of the Al. G. Field's company.

He took some glycerine into his hand, added a little water from a dishpan full standing under the sink, and then he began to apply it to some of the burnt cork, and mixed it all vigorously in the palms of his hands. "I don't know why it is," he said, "but there never was a blackface comedian who doesn't use a little glycerine with the cork. It seems to give a certain quality that nothing else will. The glycerine is to keep one's face from making up."

He began to apply the black with his two forefingers. He drew a line which would form the boundary between the cork and the rest of his face. "I'm always pretty careful about my mouth line," he said. He closed his eyes and with his two hands he began to smear his face completely, carefully avoiding the line he had drawn about his mouth. It would be a joy to any mother if she could see her child cleaning his face and ears as thoroughly as Swor blackened his.

"I never use any kind of makeup on my mouth, it doesn't look natural," he said. He passed a soft brush over his face and neck. "That is to remove any dust from the cork that might be left on the skin," he added. "Some often is, and it spoils the white in my costumes."

"Does the makeup take long to remove?"

"No, it washes right off, like this," he said, and he washed his hands in the water in the dishpan. In a moment they were white again. "We black our faces, except with our cork, with satin costumes, and then we have to wear gloves."

He pulled on a close fitting wig and the transformation was complete. Three minutes before, he had been a man of florid complexion, straight brown hair, parted on the side and with half closed gray eyes. Now he was a totem-faced, kinky-headed negro.

Wig Cost Swor \$25.

"This wig I have on was made by a man who makes a specialty of that kind. It is one of the best made and cost me \$25. It is an exact imitation of the negro's hair and is made by weaving short, kinky hairs into a net foundation. I use another one which is stiffened and built out to make the shape of my head different."

"You know it's a funny thing, but I still suffer from stage fright. As long as I've been in minstrel work, I never have got over a sinking sensation when I'm waiting for my entrance. As soon as I get on the stage I'm all right, but I don't dare look at the audience as an individual. If I did, I might see a friend while I was in the middle of a joke and forget everything I was saying."

"What kind of jokes go over best?"

"No kind in particular, but I find that the part of the country I'm in has the most difference in my performance. Down south a broad negro accent goes over, but up north it has to be modified in order that they can understand it. Down south, now, you don't dare use the word 'nigger' as we used to several years ago. Then the negroes thought we thought it was funny, but now they resent it. The only thing that I was ever hissed was in Knoxville several years ago. I forgot and used the word 'nigger.' There were a lot of colored people in the gallery and I was almost hissed off the stage. I know what the matter was right away, but I stood my ground all right until after the show. I never repeated that mistake then. A real black man can use that expression, but it is resented from a white man."

Negro Apt To Overdo.

"Why is it that a white man blacked up is better in minstrelsy than a real colored man?" he was asked.

"Chiefly, I guess, because the negro is too apt to overdo. When he gets on the stage he tries to act, and he loses all his humor. If he could act the same on the stage as off, he'd be pretty good. A negro's unconscious humor is very funny. Why, the joke that seems to go the best for me, I got from a negro. It was in a southern town and a bunch of colored stage hands were sitting around, passing some corn liquor. One said, 'Is it good?' Another tasted it, and said, 'Boy, that whiskey would make you hunt bear with a buggy whip.'"

"Does the average minstrel want to get into any other business, or does he want to keep on trouping?"

"Oh, they all think they want to get out into farming or something, especially about now, near the end of the season, but they always come back. There is a fascination about the life that always pulls them back in. They are all right and content in the daytime, but it's different at night. They want to go back then and get into their makeup."

"Would you advise others to go into the minstrel business?"

"Not unless they love it. I'd rather do blackface work than anything that I know, and I've been doing it ever since I was 16 years old and my four brothers have been in it. But it is tiring with the travel and everything, and unless a person really is crazy about it, he'd better not do it."

"How do you get the material for all your acts?"

"Mr. Field used to write all his own shows, but he is dead now—died a year ago Monday—and I write most of it now. I am having a ten-minute monologue written for me for next season, tho, which is costing me \$500. The characters are always the same each year in this show."

"Does the show ever make long stops in one place?"

"A week is as long as we ever stay in any town."

The show is composed of fifty-four men. The only lady traveling with them is Swor's wife. Since Mr. Field died, there is no real head except perhaps the manager, the organization being more like a big family, according to Swor.

Notes From Behind Scenes.

A big colored man who was helping about the scenes has been with

necessity only once to caution the men against too much noise.

It was interesting to note the expressions of the men on the stage when they were not in action. One man always sat on the edge of his seat, frowning as if he were afraid that he would forget his cue. Another made faces and gestures in an attempt to attract the attention of a hair clear across the stage. Most of them looked rather bored.

Swor brought up Jack Richards, the soloist, and introduced him. Richards is a young man of very pleasing personality and has a remarkable voice. He says he has been with the show for fourteen years, longer than any other of the actors.

When the curtain went down after one scene a small battered kettle was left on the stage. Two of the men spent some serious effort in trying to pick it up by the handle with a cane. They finally ended by using it to play shinny with.

One small black-face comedian began a hula dance behind the curtain that ended when he began to center his attention on a huge scene shifter in the course of his dance. The scene shifter simply picked him up and spanked him.

The man, who, dressed in fluffy shirts and flowing wigs, gave beautiful aesthetic dances, usually ended them by skipping gracefully into the wings, changing to a Chaplin waddle for several steps and ending by a little double shuffle.

One dancer, who danced in the Highland Fling number, came out at the end of the dance, stretched himself at full length on a bench, propped one leg up on a piece of scenery, and lay there considering the ceiling until the grand finale.

A saxophone quartet was performing. The blackfaced member was near the wings, the other three following him closely. Suddenly one of the men said to the former, with face

perfectly blank and hardly any movement of the lips, "Come on, guy, snap into it. Get over there a little further and bend more." The black man followed instructions and the act went on.

Just before the end of one act, a scene shifter called out softly, "Everybody get out of the way. They're coming in a minute." Just then the scenery, darkened for a moment, and the men rushed off the stage.

EASTER REVIVAL MEETINGS.

The Rev. J. Quincy Biggs in Charge at Central Park Church.

Easter evangelistic services will be held at the Central Park Christian church for a period of one week, beginning Sunday morning. The meetings will be conducted by members of the church. J. Quincy Biggs, pastor of the church, has enjoyed an exceptional success in conducting his own meetings through the ministry. Thirty new members have been added to the church during his brief pastorate here.

The pastor will speak on the following topics: Sunday morning, "Long Distance Religion;" Sunday evening, "Life's Narrow Pass;" Monday evening, "Five Profound Questions;" Tuesday evening, "The Great Divide;" Wednesday evening, "Grinding at the Mill;" Thursday evening, "What Are Your Thoughts?" Friday evening, "What Do You Weigh?" Saturday morning, "The Empty Grave;" Sunday evening, "The Question of Ages."

Six Over 75 Die in a Week.

Pittsburg, Kan., April 8.—Within less than a week six Crawford county residents more than 75 years old and all of whom had lived in the county more than thirty-five years, died. They were Mrs. Elizabeth Mary Biggs, 82, Pittsburg; John H. Chapman, 78, Pittsburg; William L. Biggs, 87, Pittsburg; Thomas H. Johnson, 77, Farmington; J. C. Brinley, 77, Girard; J. H. Boulware, 76, Cherokee.

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Prices—Mat., 25c; Nite, 35c and 40c; Children, 10c

Monday—All Week

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Hoop-La-La—They're back—the riot starts Monday—The same ol' Wildcat Country.

H. R. Seeman Presents
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"It Pays to Advertise"

A rollicking, laugh-producing farce comedy with the funniest comedian Topeka has seen in a decade.

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